

HORNCASTLE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer of Health
1952

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Medical Officer of Health

S.A. O'HAGAN, M.B., B.S., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector

F.W. HARPER, A.R. San.I., M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector

H. SMITH, A.R. San.I., M.S.I.A.

To The Horncastle Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Council,

I have the honour as your Medical Officer of Health, to present my annual Report for 1952.

The report is upon the lines of former reports and calls for little explanation. In the interests of brevity, I have omitted the diagrammatic representation of some statistics.

Certain statistics, however, are worthy of comment:

Firstly, the Birth Rate of the district is, significantly, the highest since the war, whilst the proportion of illegitimate births is satisfactorily declining.

These are factors generally accepted as indicative of increasing prosperity of a community. The population of the district is given by the Registrar-General as 14,320 an increase of 1000 on the previous year.

It is difficult to account for this, apart from the possible changes in service establishments, but it has the effect of apparently lowering the birth and death rates, as compared with former years. The death rate of the district and the age distribution of the deaths continue to be most encouraging.

Infectious diseases have not been a serious problem during the year, but attention is drawn to the matter of Brucellosis, a disease coming into increasing prominence in health circles.

Housing here, as elsewhere, stands out as a matter of urgency. The Rural Authority has in a sense a more difficult task than the Urban one, for the large number of small sites required preclude the mass production techniques so popular with the larger Urban Authorities. At the same time, the long period of depression of agriculture has left a legacy of bad houses which will take years to replace.

1952 has shown no spectacular improvements in the district but the way has been paved for very definite improvements in sewage disposal and water supplies, and the future will show the fruits of the work of 1952.

In conclusion I must thank all Members and Officers of the Council for the help they have so freely given me since I assumed office in April, 1952.

I am, Sirs,
Your obedient Servant,


Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICS

AREA OF RURAL DISTRICT: 114,629 acres

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S ESTIMATE OF MID-YEAR RESIDENT POPULATION: 14,230

DENSITY OF POPULATION: 0.125 persons per acre

NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES:

(PERMANENT)	3,807
(TEMPORARY)	125
(CARAVANS, ETC.)	13

RATEABLE VALUE OF RURAL DISTRICT: £42,876.

SUM REPRESENTED BY PENNY RATE: £175. 14s. 5d.

VITAL STATISTICS

Live Births

Legitimate	Male	113
	Female	121
		234
Illegitimate	Male	7
	Female	5
		12

Crude Live Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population	17. 3
Standardized Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population	22.05
Live Birth Rate per thousand Population, England and Wales	15. 3

Still Births

Legitimate	Male	3
	Female	1
		<hr/>
		4
		<hr/>
Illegitimate	Male	0
	Female	0
		<hr/>
		0
		<hr/>

Figures for Still-Birth Rate have been omitted as of no real significance when related to so small a total of Births.

Total Crude Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population	17.55
Standardized Total Birth Rate per thousand Estimated Population	22. 4
Total Birth Rate, England and Wales, per thousand Population	15.65

Deaths

Males	79
Females	67
	<hr/>
	146
	<hr/>
Crude Death Rate per thousand Estimated Population	10.24
Standardized Death Rate per thousand Estimated Population	9.44
Death Rate, England and Wales, per thousand Population	11. 3

Distribution of Deaths in Age Groups.

Age Group	0-1	1-4	5-14	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 & Over
Deaths 1952	6	2	1	2	3	6	4	17	42	66
1951	5	1	0	4	5	4	3	20	17	74
% age of total										
1952	4.1	1.34	0.67	1.34	2.0	4.1	2.7	11.4	28.2	44.2
1951	3.8	0.8	0	3.1	3.8	3.1	2.3	15.3	13	56

Causes of Death at ages under 65 years.

- 0 - 1 Diarrhoea (1), Congenital Defect (2), Pyloric Stenosis (1), Mongolism (1), Pneumonia (1).
- 1 - 4 Drowning (1), Pneumonia (1).
- 5 -14 Accidental Asphyxia (1).
- 15 -24 Fractured Skull (Accident) (1), Leukaemia (1).
- 25 -34 Multiple Injuries (Aircraft Accident) (2), Tuberculous Meningitis (1).
- 35 -44 Epilepsy (1), Metrorrhagia (1), Coronary Thrombosis (1), Duodenal Ulcer (1), Motor Accident (1), Pneumonia (1).
- 45 -54 Asthma (1), Pneumonia (1), Coronary Thrombosis (1), Cerebral Haemorrhage (1).
- 55 -64 Cancer (6), Cerebral Haemorrhage (1), Cerebral Tumour (1), Nephritis (2), Heart Disease (5), Pneumonia (1), Disseminate Sclerosis.

Maternal Mortality

There has again been no death attributed to childbirth or pregnancy. A total of 1693 children have now been born in the years since 1945 without a maternal fatality.

Causes of Death as shown in the Registrar General's Short List

Short List No.	Cause of Death	Males	Females	Total
1.	Tuberculosis, Respiratory	2	0	2
2.	Tuberculosis, other	1	0	1
3.	Syphilitic Disease	0	0	0
4.	Diphtheria	0	0	0
5.	Whooping Cough	0	0	0
6.	Meningococcal Infections	0	0	0
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
8.	Measles	0	0	0
9.	Other Infective and Parasitic Diseases	0	1	1
10.	Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	2	1	3
11.	Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	1	0	1
12.	Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	0	3	3
13.	Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	0	3	3
14.	Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	7	5	12
15.	Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	1	0	1
16.	Diabetes	1	1	2
17.	Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	5	12	17
18.	Coronary Disease, Angina	13	5	18
19.	Hypertension with Heart Disease	0	2	2
20.	Other Heart Disease	15	19	34
21.	Other Circulatory Disease	3	2	5
22.	Influenza	2	0	2
23.	Pneumonia	3	1	4
24.	Bronchitis	6	6	12
25.	Other Diseases of Respiratory System	0	1	1
26.	Ulcer of Stomach and Duodenum	1	0	1
27.	Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	1	0	1
28.	Nephritis and Nephrosis	1	0	1
29.	Hyperplasia of Prostate	3	0	3
30.	Pregnancy, Childbirth, Abortion	0	0	0
31.	Congenital Malformations	2	1	3
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	6	2	8
33.	Motor Vehicle Accidents	1	0	1
34.	All other Accidents	2	2	4
35.	Suicide	0	0	0
36.	Homicide and Operations of War	0	0	0
TOTALS		79	67	146

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Disease	Notifications Received	Deaths
Pneumonia	10	9
Polio-myelitis, non paralytic	1	0
Scarlet Fever	11	0
Erysipelas	2	0
Tuberculosis, Respiratory	5	1
Tuberculosis, Non Respiratory	0	1
Measles	42	0
Whooping Cough	41	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0
Food Poisoning	1	0
Dysentery	6	0

It is probable that not every case of pneumonia is notified since final diagnosis rests on X-ray examination, and in a Rural area prompt cure by sulphonamides or antibiotics is of greater practical importance.

Notifications of alimentary-tract infections are satisfactorily low. No evidence of an epidemic tendency was found in respect of the dysentery cases. There was, at the time a considerable outbreak of the disease in Grimsby, involving ultimately some 450 cases. It is possible that these cases had acquired their infection from this focus but in the Rural District there was no tendency to transmit the disease.

That Food Poisoning was so rare in spite of the warm dry summer is satisfactory. It must be remembered however that most cases of food poisoning are mild and recovery commences before the family decide to call the doctor. In consequence, the numbers notified are probably only a small proportion of the total.

Prevention of infectious disease, and food poisoning in particular, are matters more for the public than the sanitary officers, since the bulk of the nation's food is prepared by housewives rather than caterers.

It is the duty of both County and District Councils to take steps to prevent disease, and these should include propaganda to encourage a higher standard of hygiene in food handling in the home as well as in shops and preparation rooms. This health education will form an increasing part of the work of the Public Health Department.

Control of Infectious Disease Diphtheria Immunisation

150 children under 5 years of age were immunized in 1952 together with a further 14 between 5 and 14 years old.

Booster doses, mainly at school at the age of 5 or 11 years were given to 168 children. This reflects a regrettable fall in the proportion of babies immunized in infancy when the need is greatest.

In most districts, the work of immunization is carried out largely by the infant welfare doctor, but in this district there are large areas out of reasonable reach of a Welfare Centre, so that the task falls largely to the General Practitioner. In the course of school medical inspections, however, your Medical Officer does, in fact, immunize any child who is brought to him for the purpose, and although the numbers are at present small, they may increase and provide the extra few per cent required to provide communal safety.

Whooping Cough

This disease began to show itself as forecast towards the end of the year and reached its peak in the early months of 1953.

It is not known how many children in the District are immunized by their own doctors, and the County Council's scheme for the free immunization of children under 5 years of age did not come into operation until 1953.

Smallpox

There were no cases of disease in the area but the continued prevalence of outbreaks in other areas must serve as a serious warning against complacency.

This years figure of a total of only 73 primary vaccinations is a serious sign of neglect. A number of these vaccinated were of Air Force personnel and families stationed in the district prior to proceeding overseas so that the actual proportion of native children vaccinated at the proper time is alarmingly low - less than 20% of babies born in 1952 were vaccinated.

In this field, too, there is a need for a definite campaign. The Health Visitors do emphasise the importance of vaccination, but there is a need for a quick follow-up by whichever practitioner is to do the vaccination. It is ineffective to rely upon the mother remembering to ask her doctor to do it.

Brucellosis or Undulant Fever

No cases have been reported to me, but as the disease is not infectious amongst human beings in the normal way, it is not notifiable.

It is however very common amongst cattle in which it gives rise to contagious abortion. An infected animal remains infective for years, is less thrifty than she should be, and is a continuing danger to both herd and all who use her milk or handle her. The germs of brucellosis are present in enormous numbers in the cleanings after an abortion or normal calving and most veterinary surgeons become infected early in professional life and suffer a year or more of serious ill-health with alternating bouts of fever and comparative wellbeing.

Recent surveys of human blood samples sent to the laboratory for other purposes suggest that, far from being a rare disease as it is usually thought to be, brucellosis affects a considerable part of the population, probably in a mild form causing only a short period of fever and perhaps with only a few relapses or even none. It is rarely diagnosed in human beings but, since diagnosis depends upon laboratory examination of blood samples, it is rare for any doctor working outside a hospital to consider the diagnosis or to send a sample.

During the past two years, the Public Health Laboratory Service have examined milk samples taken from bulked milk by the sanitary inspectors not only for tuberculosis, but also for brucella abortus. The organisms have been found on a number of occasions in this District and neighbouring ones.

It is, of course, an offence for a milk producer to offer for sale milk infected with disease germs unless it has been rendered safe by pasteurization and your Medical Officer would have no hesitation in acting to enforce these provisions. Fortunately, friendly visits and explanations to the farms concerned have been successful in getting the affected milk diverted to pasteurizing plants.

I should like to see a considerable increase in the frequency of milk sampling, for the present rate is totally inadequate to give control either of brucellosis or tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis

Notifications of tuberculosis remain low but the control of the disease rests now in the hands of the Hospital Chest Clinics and the County Council. In the case of glandular tuberculosis and other forms in which bovine infection is suspected, there is a follow up of the milk supply often ending in the elimination of diseased cows. It is unfortunate that it is in these cases that notification is most remiss, for it must be admitted that the division of the care of one disease between the General Practitioner, the Surgeon and the Chest Physician often results in each thinking the other has notified the case. The preventive services, i.e., the Health Visitor and Sanitary Inspector and your Medical Officer of Health are all powerless to help unless informed, so I must plead with my colleagues to notify every case of notifiable disease as promptly as possible. It is far preferable to notify on suspicion and if necessary cancel the notification later than to defer for the specialist's opinion and perhaps omit notification altogether.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

There have been no changes in the operation of the service in the Rural District during the year.

Clinic Services remain unaltered at Horncastle, and the Clinics at Louth and Spilsby, together with the Hospitals continue to provide the normal services.

National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47.

No cases were dealt with under this section during 1952.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT

The size of the district and the mobility of some farm labourers makes it difficult to keep a check on overcrowding apart from any reported by farmers themselves.

34 new permanent houses were built by this authority during the year, with 15 by other bodies and persons. Thus, since the war approximately 1.6% of the population have been given the key of a new house.

A better impression of the state of housing in the district is gained if one assumes 5 persons per family and the actual proportion of the population rehoused rises to 8%.

This is little enough when it is remembered that in 1947 when the Housing Survey was completed, the situation was reported as follows:-

Category I	Houses fit in all respects	158 (4.8%)
"	II Houses with only minor defects	779 (23.7%)
"	III Houses requiring structural alterations or repairs	1635 (49.8%)
"	IV Houses requiring to be reconditioned	436 (13.3%)
"	V Houses requiring to be demolished	<u>275</u> (8.4%)
		<u>3283</u>

If it is borne in mind that houses in Category IV in 1947 are likely to have deteriorated further since then, some 711 houses must be regarded as in need of rebuilding or replacement. In fact this authority has built, since 1947, 192 houses and adopted some 70 ex-service huts as temporary dwellings. In addition 382 houses have been built by other persons or bodies. The majority, however, are R.A.F. married quarters which, whilst they may alleviate some crowding in Coningsby and its environs, will not affect the rest of the district.

Some progress is being made in re-housing those dwellers from the Council's temporary sites whose names had reached the top of the list but it was not possible to demolish much of the temporary housing, as it is still urgently required by other families.

WATER SUPPLIES

The year passed without any major change in the situation apart from the installation of apparatus at the Woodhall Spa Urban District Council's source for the alkalization of the water. The plant was put into operation towards the end of the year and should lessen the corrosive action of the water on pipes and fittings, without hardening the water as is the case when limestone is used.

During the dry period of the summer it was again necessary to use the Market Stainton supply which is expensive to operate, since the quality of the raw water is so bad that no risks can be taken with the chlorination plant. It is necessary to have a man in attendance throughout the pumping periods and at times the plant ran almost the 24 hours. The yield of this source is small relative to the cost of attendance and cannot be increased to an economic level without difficulties with the riparian owners.

The Council's comprehensive scheme is progressing at a steady if not spectacular rate and it will be a source of great satisfaction to everybody when it is in operation. The water will be hard, and not cheap, but it will be basically safer than the water sources at present in use and the size of the pumping plant will justify the employment of more comprehensive equipment and staff to ensure that the water is safe at all times.

The bulk of samples sent for bacteriological examination again resulted from complaints and no surprise was caused by their uniformly unsatisfactory nature.

Comparatively little of the water distributed through public mains in the district is produced by this authority. In no case during the year was an unsatisfactory report received on water from public supply.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The ex-Air Ministry Plant at Market Stainton was adopted and connected during 1951 and came into full operation during 1952. In the normal way it would have been a long time before a village as small as Market Stainton would be considered for sewerage but the use of the surplus equipment already available has brought the benefit of modern sanitation at little cost.

Coningsby and Wragby systems have continued to give cause for concern. The increased service population of Coningsby and their very heavy water consumption relative to civilian consumption results in the plant, originally intended to serve only the air station, being continuously overloaded. Peak load, especially on Sundays, causes such backing up of the settlement tanks that they threaten to overflow and flood the works. There is no reserve capacity and since the whole system is dependent on electric pumping, quite a short failure of current would cause sewage overflow at the works and in the village. At Wragby three primitive settlement tanks have served the village for years, delivering almost crude sewage into open water-courses, one of which is used for bathing. The new Housing Site would throw so much additional load onto these systems as to cause a total breakdown, and a comprehensive scheme for a proper sewage disposal system was prepared.

Special Reports were made to the Council upon both these matters and enquiries have been held by the Ministry's representative.

REFUSE COLLECTION

The quarterly collection of hardware scrap is satisfactory, as far as it goes. Coningsby district has a full weekly collection which is entirely satisfactory, although considerable nuisance has resulted from uncontrolled tipping of refuse by R.A.F. personnel. This has been brought to the notice of the Station Commander, but no reply was received.

A comprehensive refuse collection service is most desirable but would entail an enormous mileage in the sparsely populated districts but a small beginning has been made with an experimental collection of domestic ashes only from certain housing sites.

REPORT OF SANITARY WORK DURING THE YEAR

	Total No. of new houses erected during the year	49
(1)	By the Local Authority	34
(2)	By other Local Authorities	Nil
(3)	By other bodies or persons	15
I	<u>Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the year</u>	
(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	277
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	350
(2) (a)	No. of dwelling houses (included under Sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	Nil
(b)	No. of inspections made for the purpose	Nil
(3)	No. of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	12
(4)	No. of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding Sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	206
II	<u>Remedy of Defects during the year without service or Formal Notices</u>	
	No. of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	195
III	<u>Action under Statutory Powers during the year</u>	
(a)	Proceedings under 9, 10 and 36 of the Housing Act, 1936	
(1)	No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	Nil
(2)	No. of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :-	
(a)	by owners	Nil
(b)	by Local Authority in default of owners	1

(a) Proceedings under Public Health Acts

(1)	No. of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	3
(2)	No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :-	
(a)	by owners	Nil
(b)	by Local Authority in default of owners	Nil
(c)	Proceedings under Sections 11, 12 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936	Nil
(d)	Proceedings under Sections 25 and 26	Nil

IV Housing Act, 1936, Part IV - Overcrowding

(a) (I)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	Not known
(II)	Number of families dwelling therein	-
(III)	Number of persons dwelling therein	Not known
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c) (I)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	1
(II)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	7
(d)	Number of houses again overcrowded after being previously relieved	Nil

Housing Act, 1949

No. of applications for grants received	2
No. of grants made	1
No. of applications for grants made by Local Authority	Nil

V Movable Dwellings, Tents, Vans, etc.

No. of Site Licences	Nil
No. of individual Licences	26
No. inspected during the year - Sites	Nil
- Dwellings	18
No. of contraventions remedied	4

VI Backhouses

No. in district	15
No. of inspections	15
No. of contraventions	Nil
Defects remedied	Nil

VII

Control of Milk Supplies

No. of distributors on register	4
No. of dairies on register	1
No. of inspections of dairies	4
Contraventions remedied	1
No. of milk samples taken - Satisfactory	64
No. of milk samples taken - Unsatisfactory	2

VIII

Ice Cream and Meat Products

No. of manufacturers: (a) Ice Cream	4
(b) Meat Products	19
No. of premises registered for sale of Ice Cream	32
No. of contraventions remedied	Nil
No. of samples of Ice Cream taken - Grade I	Nil
Grade II	Nil
Grade III	Nil
Grade IV	Nil

IX

Slaughter-houses

No. on Register	10
No. of inspections	10
Contraventions of by-laws	Nil
Defects remedied	Nil

X

Other Food Premises

No. of inspections	10
No. of contraventions found	1
No. of contraventions remedied	1

Other Foods Condemned

5 x 7 ozs. Homberg Pork Luncheon Meat

XI

Drainage and SewerageClosets

No. of houses with privy vaults in district	Not Known
No. of houses with pail closets in district	Not known
No. of pail closets repaired	7
No. of water closets substituted for dry receptacles	75
No. of houses with water closets in district	Not known
No. of water closets repaired	43

Cesspools

Cesspools emptied, cleansed, etc.	351
Cesspools abolished	94

Drains

Drains examined, tested, exposed, etc.	89
Drains unstopped, repaired, etc.	27
Waste pipes, disconnected, repaired, etc.	35
Existing Soil Pipes, etc., renewed or repaired	Nil

Sewers

New lengths of sewer laid:	School Road, Coningsby
	Main Street, Mareham le Fen

Tanks, Filter Beds, etc.

Alterations to sewage disposal works	Nil
Any inadequacy of sewage disposal works or complaints as to smells	Yes, Coningsby

XII GeneralOffensive Trades

No. of premises in district	1
No. of inspections	2
Contraventions of by-laws	Nil
Contraventions remedied	Nil

Knackers Yard

No. Licensed	2
No. of inspections	2
Defects remedied	Nil

Shops Act, 1950

Number of shops inspected	Nil
Contraventions remedied	Nil

Water Supply

Wells {	New Sunk	5
Wells {	Closed as polluted	1 Minting

Public Supply	(Area Supplied	36 villages
	(Percentage of houses internal Supply	99%
	(Communal Supply	1%

No. of samples obtained for analysis

(a) From wells	21
(b) From public supply	5
Any insufficiency and where	Yes. Eastern Wolds District

Disinfection, etc.

Rooms disinfected	Nil
(a) Ordinary infectious disease	-
(b) Tuberculosis	1
Rooms stripped and cleansed	-
No. of premises disinfested	1

House Refuse

No. of houses using dust bins	Not known
Is refuse removed by householder or by public scavenger?	Public Scavenger
How frequently is refuse removed from each house?	Quarterly
No. of complaints of non-removal	24
Method of final disposal	Controlled tips
Are existing arrangements for refuse removal satisfactory?	Yes

XIII Details of Nuisances during year

Total number of nuisances during year

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| (1) | Abated as result of informal action by Sanitary Inspector | 56 |
| (2) | Reported to Council | |
| | (Statutory Notice issued | Nil |
| | (Statutory Notice not issued | Nil |
| (3) | Details of Nuisances abated after informal intimation | |
| | (a) Smoke | Nil |
| | (b) Accumulation of Refuse | 24 |
| | (c) Foul ditches, ponds and stagnant water | 11 |
| | (d) Dampness | 35 |
| | (e) Fowls, pigs and other animals | 1 |
| | (f) Yards repaved or repaired | - |
| | (g) Other nuisances | 15 |

(4) Details of nuisances abated after Statutory Notice

Nil

XIV Rats and Mice Destruction

No. of rodent operatives employed One full time
 No. of premises treated
 (a) Dwellinghouses 101
 (b) Other premises 130
 Are there any serious reservoirs of rats in district? Yes

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 and 1948

1. - Inspections for purposes of provision as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

Premises (1)	M/c line No.2. (2)	Number on Register (3)	Number of		
			Inspections (4)	Written Notices (5)	Occupiers Prosecuted (6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1,2,3,4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities (Non Power)	1.	17	17	Nil	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Authority (Power)	2.	61	30	2	Nil
(iii) Other Premises in which Sec.7 is enforced by the Local Authority. (Winton Construction Wragby	3.	1	2	Nil	Nil
Total		79	49	2	Nil

Cases in which defects were found

	<u>Found</u>	<u>Remedied</u>
Other offences against the act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	2	2

